

QEP EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 2016-2021: Incredi-Bull Critical Thinking



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In its 40-year history, the University of South Florida Sarasota-Manatee (USF Sarasota-Manatee) has contributed to the community through its mission to prepare students for “successful leadership and responsible citizenry.” This commitment to the mission is evidenced in the selection of critical thinking as the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) topic. USF Sarasota-Manatee focuses this initiative on two Goals: (1) the operational goal to “enhance pedagogical practices that focus on critical thinking” and (2) the student learning goal to “enhance students’ critical thinking skills.” Using a common definition, five Commitments, and nine Intellectual Standards, faculty will enable students to formulate vital questions and problems clearly; gather and assess relevant information; identify relevant assumptions, alternatives, and implications; develop well-reasoned conclusions and solutions; and communicate reasoning effectively.

Critical Thinking is one of USF Sarasota-Manatee’s six *Pillars of Intellectual Engagement*, the outcomes that undergird the Core Curriculum over all four years. Through consultation with scores of faculty, staff, students, and community constituents and after an analysis of student learning assessment data from the last five years, critical thinking emerged as the topic with the greatest potential to support the institution’s mission and address an established learning gap. Student involvement did not stop with topic selection. They were integrally involved in developing the QEP’s name, *Incredi-Bull Critical Thinking*, its logo, and the plan itself.

With continuous, broad-based involvement of the campus community, the QEP Steering Committee established the implementation plan to chart a course for faculty development, curricular integration, campus engagement, and outcomes-based assessment, while allowing for corrections as needed. Critical to the success of the QEP, faculty involvement in planning resulted in a faculty development plan that supports pedagogical practices to foster the enhancement of students’ critical thinking. Faculty will collaborate with their academic program peers to support students’ development of a shared understanding of the definition of critical thinking, the five Commitments that comprise the target critical thinking outcomes, and the nine Intellectual Standards that define the quality of thinking. These ideas become the tools faculty and students will use to develop critical thinking skills through engagement from critical thinking experiences and assignments in the freshman level through to culminating capstone projects.

The assessment plan includes a variety of assessment tools, including the faculty-developed Incredi-Bull Critical Thinking Rubric to score assignments, the Educational Testing Service’s Proficiency Profile, and the nationally-normed Watson-Glaser test with individual student critical thinking profiles. Periodic analysis of outcome data will inform enactment of the plan over the five years. The \$647,198 budget provides for a half-time QEP Director, a half-time QEP Administrator, faculty development, incentives, marketing, implementation, and assessment. The campus community offered broad support and engagement in the QEP development. It reflects and supports the mission and targets an established workforce need and student learning gap. Its successful implementation focuses on the common goal of enhancing students’ critical thinking skills.